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Ullathorne, William Bernard

Catholic mission in Australasia



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**AUSTRALIANA**  
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This copy, which has been considerably trimmed at the head is inscribed on the title-page " .. Ullathornes best respects". This inscription appears to be in Ullathorne's handwriting (c/f Cuthbert Butler: The life and times of Bishop Ullathorne. London, 1926, frontispiece of v.2)

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2. Catholic Church in Australia
- I. Title

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THE  
CATHOLIC MISSION  
IN  
AUSTRALASIA.

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BY W. ULLATHORNE, D.D.,

VIC. GEN. OF THE RIGHT REV. THE VICAR APOSTOLIC OF  
NEW HOLLAND AND VAN DIEMAN'S LAND.

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"SUFFER ME TO WEEP A LITTLE MY SORROW; FOR I  
SHALL GO, AND SHALL NOT RETURN, TO A LAND OF MISERY  
AND OF DARKNESS, WHERE IS THE SHADOW OF DEATH, AND  
NO ORDER, BUT ETERNAL HORROR DWELLETH."—JOB.

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## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.



**THESE** few pages, dear reader, give you some little information respecting the lot of the transported convict, and the labours and wants of the Australasian Mission. They appeal to the heart of every Catholic in the United Kingdom.

If I am asked my motive for writing, and means of information, I answer, as to my means of information, that for five years I have conversed, and almost lived with the convict. I have often received him on his arrival in New South Wales; I have thrice visited him in Van Dieman's Land; I have attended him in his barracks; I have followed him through every district of the country to his place of assignment; I have collected him from the ploughing oxen in the fields—from the sheep wandering in their vast tracts—and from the wild cattle in their distant runs. I have been familiar with him in every township, and on every highway; I have celebrated the mysterious rites of our religion in the bark hut, beneath the gum tree in the valley, and on the blue mountain's top, which the white cloud covers. The daughter of crime has burdened my ear with her tale of folly and of woe; the dark-

faced man has come to me, in his dress of shame and clanking fetters, from the degraded iron-gang; the sentenced criminal has wrung my heart, filling my eyes, in the cell of death. I have twice sailed with him to that last region on earth of crime and despair, Norfolk Island. He has confided himself to me like a brother to an afflicted brother, and has poured his whole soul into my breast.

As to my motive, I have but one on earth. It occupied me years before I was permitted to follow it. It has taken me round the world; it has induced me to return to my mother country now, for a time; it, alone, will persuade me to return. This is my motive—the reformation of the convict.

If I am thought bold, consider my cause. Sixty thousand souls are festering in bondage. The iron which cankers their heel, corrodes their heart; the scourge which drinks the blood of their flesh, devours the spirit of their manhood. They are cast out for intimidation, and they encourage for purification, and they are infinitely worse than when their country threw them away. To these we are yearly adding above six thousand more. Would to Heaven the common error were removed, and the poor people knew the bodily sufferings, and the moral horrors, which, at those remote extremes, await the hapless convict, now blind to his fate.

We have been doing an ungracious and an ungodly thing. We have taken a vast portion of God's earth, and have made it a cess-pool; we have taken the oceans, which, with their wonders, gird the globe, and have made them the channels of a sink; we have poured down scum upon scum, and dregs upon dregs, of the

offscourings of mankind, and, as these harden and become consistent together, we are building up with them a nation of crime, to be, unless something be speedily done, a curse and a plague, and a by-word to all the people of the earth.

The eye of God looks down upon a people, such as, since the deluge, has not been. Where they marry in haste, without affection; where each one lives to his senses alone. A community without the feelings of community; whose men are very wicked, whose women are very shameless, and whose children are very irreverent. Whose occupation has been, and is, as that described by the prophet of sorrow, "*to steal, to murder, to commit adultery, to swear falsely.*"

The naked savage, who wanders through those endless forests, knew of nothing monstrous in crime, except cannibalism, until England schooled him in horrors through her prisoners. The removal of such a plague from the earth concerns the whole human race.

**THE**  
**CATHOLIC MISSION**  
**IN AUSTRALASIA.**

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**THE vast regions forming the Apostolic Vicariate of the Right Rev. Bishop Polding, include, under the general name of Australasia, New Holland, Van Dieman's Land, and the remote penal settlement of Norfolk Island.**

**New Holland extends from 39 degrees south to 10d. 30m., and from 112 degrees east to 153d. 40m., being 2577 miles in length from north to south, and 2004 in breadth from east to west; comprising a space of 3,000,000 square miles, and being three-fourths the extent of the whole of Europe. It is now populated, besides the aboriginals of the soil, by six different, and, from each other, remote British colonies. Four of these, situated on the southern coast, viz., King George's Sound, Spencer's Gulph, Gulph St. Vincent, and Port Philip, are of recent formation; the fifth, Swan River, situated on the west, is becoming, by its extent, population, and civil progress, of considerable importance; but to none of these have we yet been able to afford the least spiritual assistance, not even a passing visit.**

New South Wales, on the eastern coast, was, in 1788, owing to the separation of North America, selected by the British government as a penal settlement; and then first received a European population of 1030 souls, of whom more than 700 were criminals. Up to 1810 the colony continued to be little more than a place of correction for deported criminals, and was governed by a succession of naval officers. About this period, emigration began to flow in the same direction, but not in any considerable numbers until some years later. The free population was further increased by the emancipation of prisoners, either by expiry of sentence, or in consideration of good conduct. In 1800, the European population did not amount to more than 7,000, it now reaches nearly 100,000 souls. And these are dispersed over a territory of 600 miles along the coast, extending from Sydney, the capital, containing 20,000 souls, on the north to Port Macquarrie, and on the south to Twofold Bay; at which points townships are now forming, speedily to become the centres of new diffusion: the population extends, in some places, for three hundred miles into the interior country. These limits are daily extending, with a view to secure the best positions and the most fertile pastures for innumerable flocks and herds.

As to the relative number of Catholics diffused through this population, the census of 1833 stated us to be one-fifth; a census more recently and accurately taken, gave us as more than one-fourth; I am confident that a still more accurate enumeration would find us to be one-third. The error lies in some masters returning the number of their servants without caring to enquire as to their religion.

Separated by Bass's Straits, and distant 120 miles to the south-east of New Holland, lies the Island of Van Dieman, whose extent nearly equals that of Ireland. From 1803, the period of its first settlement, to 1821, it continued to be a mere penal establishment. It is now a very important colony, under a distinct government, with a European population of 40,000 souls spread over its surface. Hobart Town, the capital, is distant 800 miles from Sydney, and contains a population of 14,000, whilst Launceston, a seaport on the opposite side of the island, already contains 7,000 souls.

The first missionary who reached these countries was the very Rev. Mr. Flinn, appointed by the Holy See as Archpriest, with powers to confirm. Mr. Flinn presented himself in Sydney and the surrounding country about the year 1818. He was a man of meek demeanour, who speedily won the deep love of his people, and by his ardent zeal did much in a short time. But the local government, jealous of his happy labours, under colour of his having come out unsanctioned by the British civil authorities—an act which no law stood to prohibit—cast this apostolic man into prison a few months after his arrival, deprived him of all communication with the faithful, and sent him reluctantly away by the first ship sailing for England. The Blessed Sacrament had been left by the Archpriest in the dwelling of a Catholic, of Sydney, where, for two years after his departure, the faithful, as many as could, were wont to assemble, there to offer up their prayers and receive consolation in their miseries. It is mournfully beautiful to contemplate these men of sorrow gathered round the bread of life—bowed down

before the crucified—no voice but the silent one of faith—not a priest within six thousand miles to extend to them that pledge of pardon to repentance, whose near presence they see and feel.

Mr. Flinn still lives in the grateful memory of the people. I shall never forget the words, with their accompanying accents, of a venerable, fresh-looking, white-headed old man, who had come from a distance, where he led a lonely life, to his religious duties, and who, after expressing his gratitude at my arrival in the country, exclaimed, “Oh, had father Flinn lived, *what would he have done!* He had the sweetest and the swiftest tongue of Irish that ever my ear heard.” The old man then apologised for his imperfect utterance, by observing “that he had never spoken one word of English until it was made fifty lashes to speak a word of Irish.” Indeed, the Irish Catholic was often, at that time, treated with extreme rigour. Clerical magistrates, of another creed, awarded him the scourge and darksome imprisonment for refusing to enter the protestant churches, and to mingle in a worship which his conscience disowned; the plea, to be sure, was obstinacy and disobedience. On one occasion, a priest was even required to lay his hand on the post at which some of his people were flogged, because they, *not he*, had risen in revolt to recover their freedom. I mention these things in order to show that our brief Australian history, of some forty-five years’ duration, is not without, like all histories of importance, its age of darkness and barbarism.

To allay the sensation produced in the mother countries by the treatment of the Very Rev. Mr. Flinn, the government was induced to grant a small stipend each



to two clergymen, Messrs. Connolly and Therry, who devoted themselves to this mission. These gentlemen arrived in the colonies in the year 1820. Mr. Connolly soon after established himself at Hobart Town, the then infant capital of Van Dieman's Land; whilst the Rev. Mr. Therry—a name endeared to the convict—employed himself indefatigably in traversing the colony of N. S. Wales, in administering the sacraments in every case of necessity which he could reach, and in erecting the Church of St. Mary's, Sydney. This church is a vast and lofty pile, of pointed architecture, without minute ornament, yet imposing from its massive grandeur. Considering the period of its commencement, and the means at that time existing in the colony, it was a noble effort; its interior, however, remains uncompleted.

In 1829, Mr. Therry was joined in his labours by the Rev. C. V. Dowling, and, in 1832, by the Rev. J. M'Encroe.

Soon after, the writer of these pages—then Vicar of the Right Rev. the Vicar Apostolic of the Mauritius, of whose district these vast regions at that time formed a part—touched at Van Dieman's Land, on his voyage out. He there found religion to be in a very low state. One solitary priest had lived there alone for many years, without even the opportunity of meeting a brother priest. Not a single school. A wretched wooden shed, on the outskirts of Hobart Town, placed high up the side of a lofty hill, not finished, no seat, not even a flooring board arranged and fastened, incapable of containing one-half the people—this was the only Catholic erection in Van Dieman's Land. Such a scene of religious desolation, of absolute destitution,

has been rarely witnessed amongst a numerous Catholic population. The Governor was a man of a pious turn of mind, who thought religion and education of the utmost value to every one but a Catholic.

Arrived in N. S. Wales, the writer found one-third of the population spread over this extensive territory to be Catholic, with only three clergymen; the church at Sydney not yet closed in; a chapel half raised at Campbell Town, and the commencement of a second, in a ruinous state, at Paramatta; a male and a female free school at Sydney, and two others in the interior country. Aided by the kind co-operation of his Excellency, Major-General Sir Richard Bourke, a Governor of a benevolent heart and of the most enlightened mind—whose anxiety was indefatigably directed to the establishment of a better state of things, by the diffusion of a sounder morality amongst the people, through the appliance of religious and other instruction—six additional free schools were established; preparations were made for the erection of more churches, and we anxiously expected an addition to our small number of clergymen, for which the writer had most earnestly petitioned. Meanwhile, patient until the time appointed by the Divine Providence to bring us that aid we so much needed, every effort was made to supply the place of numbers by activity. The writer has commenced his Easter Sunday at Windsor, by celebrating mass, preaching, and attending the sick; then travelled twenty miles to Parramatta, again offered the holy sacrifice, preached, and visited the hospital; and, after another distance of fifteen miles, has concluded the public labours of the day, in Sydney, by a third sermon. The Rev. Mr. Therry has said his mid-

night mass, on Christmas-day, in Sydney—his second at Liverpool, twenty miles distant—his third at Campbell Town, thirteen miles further beyond. And the other clergymen were not less active. Each remote district of the interior was repeatedly visited. Calls to visit the dying came to us sometimes from a distance of 80 miles, sometimes even further. The writer has twice sailed a distance of a thousand miles to attend executions—twice 800 miles, in another direction, on the duties of the mission. Wherever we came, the people, full of faith—whatever I may be compelled to say of the morals of many, and how, alas! had they been left to themselves—looking with deep reverence upon their clergy, gathered round us. A day or two's notice would collect together the Catholic population from the circumference of thirty miles. Any place covered with a roof served us as a chapel; but our most common recourse was to a police-office, a barrack or hospital room, or a store. For a considerable period the chapel at Parramatta was the guard-room, in which there was not one window; a sermon was even preached against drunkenness in a public-house, for want of some other place in which to assemble. Many persons applied to be instructed in the faith, and we received them, repenting, into the bosom of our unity. In the course of four years, 26 criminals from other creeds called in the aid of the priest, after receiving sentence of death, and died with every sign of the most sincere repentance.

At length, towards the close of 1835, arrived the Right Rev. Dr. Polding, the Vicar Apostolic, accompanied by three priests, and four ecclesiastical students. It was a time of unspeakable joy. We were,

indeed, moved to find, that the Successor of the Apostles, who, from the chair of Peter, as from a watch-tower, looks out and surveys the wants and distresses of the world, had, with his pervading eye, reached even us in our extremity, and had sent us a pastor according to God's own heart.

Van Dieman's Land had been visited by our good Bishop on his way. Every effort, which a short time would permit, was made to instruct and reclaim the people. Numbers embraced the occasion. The foundation of a church was laid at Richmond; a poor-school established at Hobart Town. Circumstances, then uncontrollable, alone prevented the commencement of a church in this latter place, for its 2,000 Catholics: the Rev. Mr. Cotham remained in the colony for their assistance. The Bishop in vain applied to the Governor, in vain urged the justice and expediency of supporting a proper number of clergymen and of schools. The 2,000 Catholics of Launceston, and those dispersed over the surface of the country, from that day to this, have lived and died without either religious aid for themselves, or instruction for their children.

Arrived in Sydney, the Bishop assembled his little flock of six priests, and, retaining one in the capital, containing above 6,000 Catholics, divided the interior into vast districts, allotting to each of the remaining priests one. These missionary districts take in each a range of active duty, of some 60 or 100 miles extent, a central township being selected for residence, and the remainder being visited at regulated intervals. It is thus evident that, even yet, little more can be done in the interior than to preserve religion from entire decay,

than to run hastily from place to place, to answer the most pressing demands—to administer the rites of religion to the child and the dying man. The individual efforts of the priest thus situated, must be imperfect in their application, and weak in their power, for his time is taken up, and his energies consumed, in travelling, and he comes wearied and exhausted to the performance of his duties. Efficiency, on the other hand, depends upon residence amongst his people, and familiar acquaintance with their habits and dispositions.

The Bishop directed his immediate and most earnest care to the increase of the number of schools, and to their improvement, our chief hopes resting on the rising generation, as also to the reformation of his people generally. But, before all things else, the frightfully immoral state of the convict population claimed the first and greatest share of his pastoral attention. That the reader may understand somewhat of their condition, it will be necessary to enter upon the subject at greater length ; fully, indeed, I cannot, it would require a large volume, and a pen dipped in the bitterest tears.

The number of criminals annually transported is above 6,000. In 1835, the last year of which I have a full account, there were transported, to New South Wales, 3,006 males, and 179 females ; to Van Dieman's Land, 2,054 males, and 922 females ; making a total of 6,161 criminals. The entire number in actual bondage is, in New South Wales, nearly 30,000, whilst in Van Dieman's Land there are nearly 20,000, to which must be added 3,000 for the penal settlements of Norfolk Island, Moreton Bay, and Port Arthur.

It is to be further considered, that the great proportion of free inhabitants of these colonies consist of emancipists from a similar condition of bondage. Of all these, one-third are Irish Catholics, of whom many, if I except those from the large cities, have been transported for the infringement of penal laws, for aggrarian offences, and minor delinquencies; whilst those from England are, with rare exceptions, punished for direct aggression on property or the person. As, however, there is no distinction in the degree of punishment, they become mingled, contaminated, and corrupted alike.

They arrive in numbers of from two to three hundred in a ship, under the authority and superintendence of a surgeon of the royal navy. Thrown together for four months, with no occupation, they live over again their guilty joys and exciting hazards, devising new ones for the future. Their emulation, especially on board the English ships, is, to exhibit to admiration their accomplishments in wickedness—to prove the most diverting of their comrades by the clever recital of their past infamies—to enrich the effect of the whole by the most profane and obscene language. Facts exhausted, imagination is ready with her teeming stores—thus they go on—incessantly applying the whet-stone to their wit, and sharpening the edge of their guilty cunning. The day over, they are closed down at night under hatches, each rolled in his blanket, three, four, or more, placed together in one wooden crib—the seven years' prisoner couched with the convict for life—the petty thief with the murderer—the simple countryman with the gaol polluted felon, and the monster from the hulk. With such a mass of individuals

crowded together so long a time, wonder not if you hear that the more decent soon rival the worst in depravity of manners, insensibility of mind, and corruption of heart. Bibles, common prayers, and tracts, are plentifully distributed, even on board the Irish ships, where they are worse than useless; whilst there is no anxiety to furnish the Catholic one single book of prayer, or instruction, which he would gladly read. On Sunday, on board the Irish as well as English ships, the prisoners, a few Protestants sprinkled amongst them, are driven, like sheep, to the pasturage of Protestant common prayers and homelies, the only effect of which is to stir up a secret spirit of dissatisfaction and revolt, and to plant the feeling of a grievance. The prisoner does not very nicely discriminate qualities, but balances within his mind the wrong doing of his task-masters against his own misdeeds, and deducts from the sum of respect which he considers due to the constituted authorities.

Arrived at their destination, and placed, in the first instance, in their barracks, they are not allowed to associate with the "*old hands*," lest, say they, the new ones should be contaminated—an admission that they are not yet so bad, but they are destined to become worse. Until lately, the boys were confined in a separate establishment, but it proved such a hive of busy wickedness—sent out on the wing such a swarm of accomplished pests, that it is now broken up, and boys and men are lodged in the same great barrack. Here begins the initiation into the deeper mysteries of the masonry of crime. I have known the well-disposed prisoner rejoice, after labouring all day, to be allowed to watch an unenclosed building during the inclement

night, rather than be locked up there. I have known the infirm man invoke any torture elsewhere, so he might not rest there; I have known the blind consider his privation of sight a blessing, as shutting out wickedness through one sense from his knowledge. I remember a youth who, expressing his astonishment at the infamies amongst which he suddenly found himself, observe, "Such things no one knows [in Ireland]." I think I now see the newly arrived convict, his frame shuddering and shrinking together, whilst, with his feelings yet fresh, he recurs to the iniquities of the barracks. Colonel Arthur has spoken of the prisoner's "exposure to ill usage from criminals worse than himself." Wherever he goes—to work, to church, to his meals—he carries, tied to his person, his small canvas bag, containing his only little necessities, and, perhaps, a prayer book, otherwise they would be stolen in a moment. Whilst the poor creature who, with a more timid conscience, and a keener sense of his condition, seeks to separate as much as possible from the rest, and to heal his seared conscience by the prayer of repentance, offers a fine game for the chase of ridicule, and is hunted down with a mingled pack of scoffs, jeers, obscene oaths, and rough practical jokes. The newly arrived stranger, whilst straying over Hyde Park, and enjoying the first sight of that beautiful scenery of undulating lands, of curious shrubs and trees, of graceful mansions, and of the waters of the Cove, arched over by so bright a sky, in the cool mellow evening, is suddenly startled by a loud, brawling, high-keyed, articulated yell, which, long and hurried, breaks through the solemn stillness, when all again is silent. Recovered from alarm, the stranger



is told that it is the voice of the overseer chiding, or giving his directions to, the convict. The feelings of the convict are petrified by the hardness of every thing about him. He never feels the touch of kindness. Wonder not that his vital warmth dies, and he becomes a haggard, insensible thing.

Up to the present time, there has been no discrimination of punishment, graduated upon any distinction of crime, except in the period of sentence. There are now a few exceptions made in the case of certain criminals worked by government; but assignment is yet a lottery. The worst characters, men who, from their civic acquirements and superior cunning, are found most useful—and such as, in cases of equal crime, are most guilty, from having had better instruction and fewer temptations, generally come best off from being transported. Let there be landed from the same ship, a footman, a carpenter, and a blacksmith. The footman has been brought up about a good family, well instructed, and never knew want. He is a prize quickly drawn. His frieze jacket is doffed before a handsome suit of livery, he has the run of his master's kitchen, and soon contrives to find a little money. As he stands at his master's door, or sits on the coach-box, he is the envy of a number of hapless wretches, who, having neither his ability in service or in crime, are hastening up the country, in their rough attire, from the same ship, carrying, suspended from their shoulders, their only consolation, a rug and blanket, there to be worked, like oxen, from day-light to dusk, under a burning sun and a heartless overseer, with no better encouragement than the threat of the lash. The carpenter and blacksmith have been brought up appren-

tices, amidst the domestic comforts and the good example of the pains-taking middle class. These are assigned to master mechanics. They are a valuable property, and they know it. They work little or much, well or bunglingly, as they are treated; and if *they* consider that treatment decidedly bad, they will contrive to get returned to Government, and assigned to a new master. They therefore receive a respectable sum weekly to secure their industry. At slack times they work a little privately for themselves, and have an occasional holiday. On Sunday they appear together on the pavement, well-dressed, and conclude the day with a few brother mechanics, over a friendly glass. Monday is a holiday—a day to get drunk upon, and probably ends in a brutal fight. The master says they are sad rogues, but clever fellows he cannot do without, and these things are overlooked. In the midst of their sensualities, these men meet groups of woe-begone countenances, which they knew on ship-board, and which belong to men who are dragging carts all day, and locked up all night, because they had not their own skill either as mechanics or as criminals. The footman was transported for breaking into his master's desk for gold, of which he had no need; the mechanics made burglarious instruments, and broke into the sleeping house at dead of night; the cart-draggers were taken up for riot at a fair; the wretched men on their road up the country, stole bread for their starving families, or ducks in a frolic. The tall, grizzly-headed man, with a sharp sinister countenance, his body enveloped in a long, seedy coat, once black, he is assigned, as you perceive, to a couple who, once prisoners, now free, keep a public-house by

the road-side. This man is considered by the neighbours "a gentleman" and "a scholar." I do not mean to say that he is of the educated class—these are sent to Port Macquarrie; but that he can read, and write, and talk. He keeps the accounts, teaches the children, writes prisoners' petitions, and entertains guests. That brawny man, with dripping hair and sun-scorched face, whom he scolds and swears at for not cleaning his shoes before he comes in for his ration of food from the fields, ere he retire to his slab hut for the night—there to lay his head on a log, and dream of his ruined wife and outcast children—he shot a partridge and a pheasant. The lad who runs his errand, early lost his parents, and fell among thieves. The hard-working woman servant, whom he had to make drunk before he could subdue her sense of shame, stole, in an hour of vanity, a few things from her mistress. The man in black himself forged a cheque for fifty pounds.

In the course of a short time, the footman grows careless, is found occasionally drunk, fills the house, in the absence of his master, with bad language—little things are missed, then things of more importance—a flogging follows, and then the tread-mill. He there finds a number of reckless companions, who teach him that he is entitled to remunerate his own services. He returns a hypocrite, and a conscientious thief. His master hesitates on further punishment, knowing he may fare still worse with a new servant, until, no longer endurable, the man is sent to an iron-gang, to be worked in chains for three months; and one of the female servants, for an equally obvious reason, is returned to the factory, or house of correction, for two

years. After a few such vicissitudes of service and punishment, by the magic of a ticket of leave, enabling him to provide his own maintenance, the footman marries, and commences publican; the carpenter is joined by his wife, who comes out by a compromise with the law, and, as well as the smith, becomes a master mechanic; whilst the man in black marries the relict of a hard-working settler. They hold their property in the names of their free wives, and solace their cares, from morning to night, with potations of rum, all but the man in black, who lends out money at five and forty per cent.

These are the few and unenviable exceptions to the general rule of wretchedness, the report of which has, in this country, spread so many delusions, and caused such great mischief. As, however, a regulation is about to be adopted, prohibiting assignment in towns, they are not likely again to occur.

Let us now follow the great body of convicts from the ship to their assignment in the interior. We shall readily distinguish those newly arrived from the "old hands." The grey woollen cap is mounted upon a face of fresh-looking, lively features, the decent order of dress, the eager glance of interest as you pass, the curious look round, the motion of respect, promise a very different state of mind from the slovenly putting on, the tawny, stagnant features, sluggish eye, and drowsy ox-like movement of feet and shoulders, and downward head, indicating indifference to all things but himself, which marks the approach of the convict who has felt his bondage. At every step in this dreadful system, springs there up a new source of corruption. They are assigned to masters who have probably from

thirty to seventy in the same condition. Lodged in a row of log-walled, bark-roofed sheds, each containing four or six persons, the new comers, until they gather experience, are made the tools and cat's-paws for mischief, of their more knowing associates, which brings them to early punishment, and into bad odour with their masters, whilst it yields sport to their crafty comrades behind the scene. In most cases, the practice of religion is a thing unrecognised, the power of ridicule forbids it to appear openly; the Catholic is perhaps a hundred miles removed from a priest; the Sunday is spent in mending clothes, in running over the country, and in supporting sly grog-shops on stolen property. Meanwhile, how many new-comers have I known to have stolen into the woods to hide their prayers, trembling to be discovered on their knees, as though they were doing some guilty thing.

It can scarcely be expected that these men will be readily disposed to do more than can be avoided of hard drudgery, which brings them no reward, or any prospect of speedy termination. They are assigned to their master for reformation, but the master's object is profit. His contention is to produce as much labour out of his slave, in as short a time, as possible; when this one is worked out, another is ready to his hand, without further cost than an application to government. The object of the prisoner is to enjoy as much leisure as possible. The incentive to industry and good conduct is the lash. This is the favourite and most frequent punishment. Where a master in England finds fault, the master in Australia threatens the lash; where the master here grows angry, the master there swears, and invokes the lash; where here he talks of turning

away, there he procures the infliction of the lash : for idleness, the lash ; for carelessness, the lash ; for insolence, the lash ; for drunkenness, the lash ; for disobedience, the lash ; wherever there is reason, and wherever there is not reason, the lash. Ever on the master's tongue, and ever in the prisoner's ear, just as he himself urges his drowsy bullocks, sounds the lash !—the lash !—the lash !

“ The dread of his master's frown,” observes Col. Arthur, “ is to the prisoner like the drawn sword over the head of Dyonisius's courtier.” It may be observed that some masters are men of education and humanity. The greater number, however, are not so ; and those who are, come seldom into personal contact with their convict servants. Their place is supplied by overseers, men who, most commonly, have been themselves prisoners, and wreak their former suffering on their present subjects. If free, this is most often their chief qualification for a very difficult charge—a charge requiring both good temper and sound sense, and whose successful management demands a prudent intermixture of kindness in manner with firmness of purpose. Mr. Commissioner Bigge, in his report to Parliament, has well observed, that “ the propensity to violent language and abuse,” which becomes habitual with those to whom is committed the irksome task of enforcing this compulsory labour, does not improve the depraved, whilst it “ debases and hardens the heart of others.” A little free license, and next a hot word or a hasty check, draws out expressions which the overseer considers insolent and insulting to his dignity : he let himself down, and now fears the consequence ; angry words follow ; the man is reported—taken be-

fore a magistrate; authority must be supported; presumption lies always against the prisoner; the case is summarily decided; the hideous triangle is displayed with its gory associations; the man is stripped and hung up; the scourger comes forth from the place in which he hides himself from the scorn of men; he deliberately displays his brawny strength, grasps his scourge, draws his clotted fingers through the tangles of its many knots, the nine detested thongs descend, and after a fiftieth repetition, each deliberate in preparation and swift in its cutting stroke, he is taken down. And now he is disposed to be really insolent; he has been stung by the eye of every on-looker; he feels his degradation; he knows that a word, had it been listened to, might have explained all; his brows burn; shapes that he dares not encourage flit across his mind; he recklessly commits some new offence—is again hung up—a few strokes remove the slough with which nature has shielded his former wounds, and now the wiry cords suck and eat their fill of the flesh and gore of the wretched man—whilst bleeding, writhing, swaling—but let me spare the sickening scene. The fiend now fills him with red visions of vengeance, and he either murders his overseer—a common crime—or takes to the bush, where, finding nothing on which to subsist, he lives on plunder, is taken up, and I generally find such men, so treated, in the end, either in an iron gang, in the death cell, or in Norfolk Island.

*“Eheu cicatricum et sceleris pudet,  
Fratrumque.”*

It may be observed that this cannot always be the case, to which I answer, I am not giving the exception.

but the rule. Yet this is not reformation, or the way to it; treat man like the brute, and he will become one. A great outcry was made by the slave-masters against the present Governor of New South Wales, for having limited the infliction to fifty lashes at a time, although the records of this infliction are most sickening and appalling.\* Whilst a former governor, General Macquarrie, states, he has no doubt, "that many convicts who might have been rendered useful and good men, had they been treated with humane and reasonable controul, have sunk into despondence by the unfeeling treatment of such masters; and that many of those wretched men, driven to acts of violence by harsh usage, and who, by a contrary treatment, might have been reformed, have betaken themselves to the woods, where they can only subsist on plunder, and have terminated their lives on the gallows."

In the chain-gangs, great numbers of prisoners are brought together for colonial delinquencies of a secondary class. In 1835, the number of men in chain-gangs was, in N. S. Wales, 1,191; in road-gangs, 982. In Van Dieman's Land, the number in chain-gangs was 805; in road-gangs, 2,919. They are clothed in a piebald dress of grey and yellow, and worked in irons under a military guard. When employed in the interior, they are, at night and on the Sunday, locked up in square portable boxes, some sixteen being crowded together in a space considerably less than two feet square for each person. The countenances of these men are shocking to behold. On board the Sydney hulk, ten or twelve are crowded together into a cell so small that they cannot lie on their backs. When

Vide Appendix.



the public prison fills, before sessions, the prisoners have often been compelled to stand and lie down alternately for want of room. The consequence of all this can only be conjectured by those experienced amongst criminals.

What shall I say of the female convict, acknowledged to be worse, and far more difficult of reformation, than the man? Her general character is immodesty, drunkenness, and the most horrible language. On board the ship in which she sails, there is generally to be found some two or three grey-headed hags, the very incarnation of crime, who become the priestesses of initiation to the younger and more simple-minded during the voyage. Assigned to service, she becomes the object of persecution, either to her master—for they are assigned to all classes—or to some favourite servant. Does she defend herself—her life is made a torment. She is harrassed, threats are held out—the police court is at hand, a tale is readily made out—truth is never looked for from a prisoner in self-defence—the police court is amused, the town echoes the laugh of the police reporter, and the woman is doubly punished. Does she fall—she is returned to the factory, care is taken of her at the public expense—she remains nursing her child for two years, it is then separated from the mother, (who returns to service,) and is placed in an orphan school—no enquiry is made, and she returns again and again. I have baptized fourteen of these children at one time, whose mothers seldom gave any sign that they felt ashamed, or were conscious of any reason for such a feeling.

One of the favourite topics between the ladies of Sydney of the melancholy cast, concerns the re-

volutions which their domestic empire is perpetually undergoing, from the misconduct and changes of their assigned servants. The first thing against which a stranger is cautioned is servants. He has only to broach the subject in any house which he enters, when he will be inundated with complaints of the negligence, slovenliness, drunkenness, and dishonesty of assigned servants. I remember a lady having good naturedly consoled herself, after one servant had gone to be flogged, and another to the factory, with the consideration, that all her neighbours' servants had been locked up, the night before, drunk together in the watch-house. As marriage makes the female her own mistress, by assigning her from her service to her husband, it is eagerly sought after. The motive is to obtain personal liberty. A slight, often the merest accidental acquaintance—affection unconsulted—disparity of age, of character, and of manners, thrown out of consideration—the possibility of a previous union in the mother country, unheeded—the known fact of such a prior engagement not rarely concealed—and they are married, to drag each other through a life of misery and mistrust.

The factory at Parramatta is the female house of correction, there is a similar establishment in Van Dieman's Land. It has hitherto been the sink of abomination. Generally containing a fluctuating population of some six hundred females, their principal occupation is the work of mutual corruption. Returned hither from service for correction, after receiving a new finish in vice, they are again sent forth into circulation, carrying with them infection to every extremity of the colony. At Hobart Town, sundry persons have, by

favour, obtained their servants direct from the ships, on arrival, to prevent their bringing with them the contamination of the factory. In Parramatta the military have been known to be called in, as a last resource, to quell the female riots of the factory. I am happy to hear that, since my departure from the colony, ameliorations have been introduced into this institution.

The numerical disparity between the sexes, which is still, amongst the prison population, as three to one, is the cause of indescribable evils. The government, with a view to remedy, has been sending out ship-loads of free females; but what must those females generally be, who, abandoning their country, go out such a voyage, unprotected, in the expectation of marrying convicts. The extravagant hopes held out to these poor creatures—the richness with which the colonial prospect is painted and gilded to their fancies—is of course followed by disappointment, and disappointment by self-abandonment. And what is the consequence, in this country, of so much exaggeration, by way of lure, but to induce a belief that the convict's must indeed be a happy lot, when the authorities tell us it is so delightful a thing to go out so long a voyage with the expectation, in the end, of receiving his hand in marriage.

I have said, that our hopes are chiefly rested on the rising generation. But, alas! we see them growing up from earliest infancy in a spirit of irreverence and dissoluteness, which is yet not to be wondered at when we consider that they are in the hands—either as mothers or as nurses, of such women as I have described. I know a lady, who, from her experience, durst not entrust her infant children with women, but actually

employed men convicts as nurses in preference. What can I say of such women as mothers, but that their children are cradled in vice, are nursed at the bosom of profanity, and fed with the poison of ungodly lips, and that they drink in iniquity from their parent's example. A youth, when corrected at school, will run into the bush for days before he even returns to his home, confident he will then be supported by his mother against his teacher.

A traveller in Australia has observed, that, to the convict "the great charm of life is to be drunk as often as possible." An always sober servant in a town would be a phenomenon. I have known 14 public-houses in full employ in a small township of 1800 inhabitants. In Sydney there are 224 licensed taverns, in addition to sly grog shops; and they line every road side at short intervals. In every considerable township there are one or more quarters in which the signs hang out on each side into the street as thick and numerous as the knightly banners that adorn the chapel of Henry at Westminster. There the incessant noise of fiddles, tambours, and hautboys—the drunken song—the dissolute laugh—the heavy curse—the scream, at intervals, startle and wake up the ear of the by-passer through the day and live-long night. Filthy, swollen-faced wretches, with something of the shape of woman in them, haunt the doors, and the very streets reel and stagger with drunkenness, dissoluteness, and debauchery, until the purest minds are defiled by the continued contact. The prisoner is not supposed to enter these houses, except for refreshment on a journey. For him the sly grog shop is prepared. Wherever, a little retired from the road or by-path, you perceive,

under the trees, the bark hut, with an unglazed opening in place of window, forming a frame-work in which a few musty peaches scattered, are domineered over by a ginger beer bottle, holding in its mouth a few broken pipes; there be assured, that the prisoner will find, though no one else can, a person, who, without leave from his master or license from the government, is ready to exchange that master's property for any amount of that bane and paralysis of the colony, rum. The annual amount of duty on this spirit received in Sydney is £120,000. It has been calculated that the quantity of rum drunk in New South Wales, compared to the quantity of spirits consumed by an equal number of people in England, is as 17 to 5. After bearing all this, the number of criminal committals can awaken no surprise. In 1835, there were 116 capital convictions in the criminal court of Sydney, all for crimes of violence; whilst the convictions for petty offences, for the same year, throughout this one colony, amounted to nearly 22,000. The Rev. Mr. M'Encroe has himself attended 74 executions in the course of four years, and a yet greater number capitally convicted also, but committed to Norfolk Island, to them, he remarks, "*a second death.*" "Very many," he writes to me, "declared on the scaffold, that they preferred suffering death to being sent to Norfolk Island, fearing more the depravity of that place than death itself." Judge Burton described the colony, in an address from the bench, as a people made up of criminals and prosecutors, occupied in incessantly crossing and recrossing the threshold of the courts of justice. The crime of perjury is of such common and notorious occurrence, that the barristers tell me they seldom think of resting

evidence upon the positive oaths of witnesses, of whom there are generally to be found several on each side of a case swearing the directly contrary. A judge at Hobart Town solemnly declared upon the bench, that he had only to step into the street, and hold up a finger, when twenty perjurers would appear, to swear up any cause, however desperate.

Let it be borne in mind, that each of these men has from two to three hundred shipmates, who are his bosom companions; that, when arrived, he finds various former intimates from the same town or county; that, after a while, he probably adds to these some hundred, or two, or three, of chain-gang mates; that all these are sworn brothers, prepared, with a true *esprit de corps*, to back each other out of any difficulty. Hence, in a case of defence or of revenge, as the chance may be, the collecting together a few unprincipled, but ready-witted witnesses, is the least difficulty. The display of malignant passions, which are found darkly tracking their prey through our Australian courts, is something horribly fearful.

There is another class of crimes, too frightful even for the imagination of other lands; which St. Paul, in detailing the vices of the heathens, has not contemplated; which were unknown to the savage, until taught by the convict—crimes which are notorious—crimes that, dare I describe them, would make your blood to freeze, and your hair to rise erect in horror upon the pale flesh. Let them be enfolded in eternal darkness.

There may be seen at Florence, a representation of the ravages of the plague, and of our human frame in its progressive states from death to final decomposi-

tion. It is on a very small scale, the subject being so dreadful, that men say, were it larger, it would not be endurable. It is for a similar reason that I have only ventured to exhibit a miniature of the convict's progress through the successive stages of his transition, from first conviction to his ultimate state of corruption. I have neither applied the strongest colours, nor worked in the deepest shadows, nor brought out the worst details of the subject. Yet what history can produce the records of such a debasement of our human condition in the dark ages of any nation.

In an atmosphere so thick with crime—on a land so spread with obstacles—it is a people thus shamefully fallen, that the Right Rev. Bishop Polding, and his clergy, are most strenuously labouring to raise up and reform.

Wherever they are gathered in numbers, as in barracks, prisons, chain-gangs, hulks, &c., there, besides the usual attendance, the Bishop, with one or two priests, is to be found at intervals, where, by a succession, for some days, of exhortations, instructions, and religious exercises, many are brought to repentance, and, finally, to the sacraments. The hospitals, where one-half the diseases are the direct offspring of crime, are daily visited. The prisoners in barrack are assembled on a week-day evening, as well as on the Sunday. Where we have not time to be, our few ecclesiastical students are called in aid, and proceed, two by two, to catechise, instruct, and prepare the way for us. Every opportunity that offers is embraced to bring back these poor lost ones to a sense of their condition. The penitent is joyously received at every hour of the day or night. We know of no rest, but in the heart of the

afflicted. Alas! how many that are now aliens would embrace the faith, were there but pastors to instruct them; and how many returning prodigals, were there but fathers to receive them. Even from those of other opinions, I have known, out of a number of forty-five condemned to death, not less than two and twenty who have, in their last hours, embraced the faith, and died with all the signs of fervent repentance for their sins; and this has been about the proportion of those who, in the last extremity, have sought our aid.

When a prison ship arrives, from Ireland especially, by permission of government, who have seen the beneficial result, the Catholic prisoners are, for a succession of four or five days, conducted to the church, preparatory to assignment. There the Bishop, assisted by two priests, one of whom is called from the interior for the occasion, enters with them upon a course of religious exercises. They are first addressed with gentle kindness; we show them our sympathy by entering into their unhappy circumstances with compassion. As their feelings begin to flow and all irritation and bitterness of heart ceases, they are chastened and humbled under the duties of repentance; their mind is directed to the cross, and to him who suffered upon it, innocent, for their guilt; and their memory is filled with the passion of God. With the mystery of atonement, the value of resigned suffering, as a salutary expiation, is dwelt upon. They are exhorted to submit to, if not welcome, their privations in the spirit of penance—to attach their afflictions to the cross, to bow beneath its power, and unburden their sins at its foot; and, henceforth, to do and endure, for the penitent love of God, whatever may be imposed upon them. Their



resolutions are strengthened with the sacraments. These exercises conclude with a series of advice on their future condition as prisoners, on their duty to their masters, their dangers from their fellow-servants and their own passions, and on the ultimate rewards of good conduct.

The effect of these labours, where they have reached, has, with the grace of God, I am happy to say, become already visible; so much so, that the Principal Superintendent of Convicts urged the fact, grounded on the evidence of his personal observations, in a public speech, since printed, as a motive for supporting our religion. The acting Chief Justice, I am informed, has stated that, since the arrival of the Bishop and his clergy, a very visible diminution has taken place in the number of police cases, which is attributed to their labours. The newspapers—even those opposed to us—have, for the last three years, successively, recorded their astonishment that the festival of St. Patrick is no longer distinguished for its riotousness and drunkenness—particularly, that on the occasion of its last recurrence, the number of police cases were fewer than for many previous weeks. Mr. M'Arthur, in his recent work in support of certain petitions to King and Parliament, speaks of the “recent accounts from the colony of great amelioration in the character and condition of the Irish Roman Catholic population, in consequence of the zealous labours of their clergy.” Even Dr. Lang, with all his bitterness of unprovoked opposition, though with a sinister object, admits their “well-directed efforts.”\*

\* This gentleman, in his work on N. S. Wales, takes every opportunity of impressing the notion, that the Irish is a worse and

What might be done, indeed, had we means and numbers? At present, we are afraid of our own labours. These unhappy men leave us in dispositions so good, and our own minds are only filled with melancholy forebodings. They leave us, and we see them no more, except such as are brought down the country to an hospital or a gaol; for, in the greater part of the interior, the lot of the Catholic convict continues much the same as when, in 1832, it was described by Mr. Commissioner Therry.

“The moment he reaches the shores of Australia, he is sent into the interior of the country, there to be assigned to a settler, at a distance of perhaps fifty, one hundred, or even two hundred miles from Sydney. There he is estimated according to the quantity of labour which he is capable of performing—there, amidst associates reckless in their habits, and infamous in their vices, his days are passed without care and without solicitude—there, also, (and it is of this I complain,) the voice of religion, with its salutary counsels and its blessed consolations, never comes. For him, religion has lost all sanction—morality, all attraction. Can it be wondered at, that when temptation presents itself anew, the miserable man continues his career of

more irreformable character than the English convict. In a long passage in the first edition, left out in the second, he refutes himself. Exemplifying the effects of judicious management of farm convict servants, in the case of his brother's mode of treatment: of thirteen persons, whose course he traces from faithful service to final settlement for themselves, the greater number are Irish Catholics. The wakes after executions, and their bad effects, which he so powerfully describes, do not exist. The bodies are interred early in the afternoon of the day of execution. We are indebted to Dr. L. for several errors of this sort.

crime, until, at length, he expiates his offences on the gallows, or, by an equally horrible fate, is cast into a penal settlement, whose inhabitants consist of a *populus vitiorum*, the misery and horror of which it is shocking to contemplate."

Of these penal settlements, the principal are, Norfolk Island, to which men are re-transported from N. S. Wales; and Port Arthur, to which they are sent from Van Dieman's Land. Turning to this portion of our mission, my memory fills with sensations of horror, mingled with consolations, such as, perhaps, few have experienced. But I must be brief.

Norfolk Island is 1,000 miles from Sydney. It is small, only about twenty-one miles in circumference, of volcanic origin, and one of the most beautiful spots in the universe. Rising abruptly on all sides but one from the sea, clustering columns of basalt spring out of the water, securing, at intervals, its endurance with the strong architecture of God. That one side presents a low, sandy level, on which is placed that penal settlement, which is the horror of men. It is approachable only by boats, through a narrow bar in the reef of coral, which, visible here, invisibly circles the island. Except the military guard, and the various officers and servants of government, none but the prisoners are permitted to reside on the island, nor, unless in case of great emergency, can any ship, but those of government showing the secret signals, be permitted to approach. The island consists of a series of hills and vallies, curiously interfolded, the green ridges rising one above another, until they reach the shaggy sides and crowning summit of Mount Pitt, at the height of 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. The estab

lishment consists of a capacious quadrangle of buildings for the prisoners, the military barracks, and a series of offices in two ranges. A little further beyond, on a green mound of nature's beautiful making, rises the mansion of the Commandant, with its barred windows, defensive cannon, and pacing sentry. Straying some distance along a footpath, we come upon the cemetery, closed in on three sides by close, thick, melancholy groves of the tear-dropping manchineal; whilst the fourth is open to the restless sea. The graves are numerous and recent—most of the tenants having reached, by an untimely end, the abode to which they now contribute their hapless remains and hapless story. I have myself witnessed fifteen descents into those houses of mortality—and in every one lies a hand of blood. Their lives were brief, and as agitated and restless as the waves which now break at their feet, and whose dying sound is their only requiem.

Passing on by a ledge cut in the cliff that hangs over the resounding shore, we suddenly turn into an amphitheatre of hills, which rise all round, until they close in a circle of the blue heavens above; their sides being thickly clothed with curious wild shrubs, wild flowers, and wild grapery. Passing the hasty brook, and long and slowly ascending, we again reach the open, varied ground. Here a tree-crowned mound; there a plantation of pines; and yonder, below, a ravine descending into the very bowels of the earth, and covered with an intricacy of dark foliage, interluminated with checkers of sunlight, until beyond it opens a receding vista to the blue sea. And now the path closes, so that the sun is almost shut out; whilst giant creepers shoot, twist, and contort themselves upon

your path, beautiful pigeons, lories, parrots, parrots, and other birds, rich and varied in plumage, spring up at your approach. We now reach a valley of exquisite beauty, in the middle of which, where the winding, gurgling stream is jagged in its course, spring up, the type of loneliness, a cluster of some eight fern trees, the finest of their kind, which, with different inclinations, rise up to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, a clear, black, mossy stem, from the crown of which is shot out on every side one long arching fern leaf, the whole suggesting the idea of a clump of Chinese umbrellas. Ascending again, through the dark forest, we find, rising on every side, amongst other strange forest trees, the gigantic pine of Norfolk Island, which, ascending a clean stem, of vast circumference, to some twelve feet, shoots out a coronal of dark boughs, each in shape like the feather of the ostrich indefinitely prolonged, until rising, with clear intervals, horizontally, stage above stage, the green pyramid cuts with its point the blue ether, at the height of 200 feet. Through these, we at length reach the crown of Mount Pitt, whence the *tout ensemble*, in so small a space, is indescribable, of rock, forest, valley, corn-field, islets, sea-birds, land-birds, sunshine, and sea. Descending, we take a new path to find new varieties. Emerging, after a while, from the deep gloom of the forest, glades and openings lie on each hand, where, among many plants and trees, the guava and lemon prevail. The fern tree springs gracefully out, and is outstripped by the beautiful palmetto, raising its "light shaft, of orient mould," from above the verdant level, and, at the height of twenty-five feet, spreading abroad into the clear air a cluster of bright green fans. In other places,

the parasite creepers and climbers rise up in columns, shoot over arch after arch, and again descend in every variety of Gothic fantasy—now they form a high long wall, which is dense and impenetrable—and next, come tumbling down a cascade of green leaves, frothed over with the delicate white convolvulus. Our way, at length, becomes an interminable, closed-in vista of lemon trees, forming overhead a varied arcade of green, gold, and sunlight. The orange once crowded the island as thickly, but were cut down by the wanton tyranny of a former Commandant, as being too ready and too great a luxury for the convict. Stray over the farms, the yellow hulm bends with the fat of corn. Enter the gardens, especially that delicious retreat, “Orange Vale,” there, by the broad-breasted English oak, grows the delicate cinnamon tree—the tea, the coffee, the sugar plant—the nutritious arrow-root—the banana, with its long, weeping streamers and creamy fruit—the fig—all tropical fruits in perfection, and the English vegetables in gigantic growth. The air is most pure, the sky most brilliant. In the morning, the whole is drenched with dew. As the sun comes out of his bed of amber, and shoots over a bar of crimson rays, it is one embroidery of the pearl, the ruby, the emerald; as the same sun, at mellow eventide, aslant his yellow rays between the pines and the mountain, they show like the bronzed spires of some vast cathedral, flood in golden light.

It has been argued, even in the present case, that beautiful nature is powerful to correct the human heart. And here is beauty like the shadow of the countenance of the Creator. Yet man alone—made in His image—remains untouched by his spirit, and wanders

the demoniac of the scene. No. The devout man, like David, will muse on these, his works, until he kindle like a fire; but perverse hearts never see fine days or beautiful prospects. How, indeed, can they? Their thoughts are with society; there they find their sensual joys, and there they willingly dwell. As if for ever to refute such a notion, we find the foulest crimes always staining the fairest lands. Those five criminal cities, on whom the Lord rained down his fire and his fury, were placed in a very beautiful country, and Norfolk Island is the modern representative of those guilty cities. No; not nature, but Almighty grace, is powerful to convert and purify the heart.

I have already observed, that such is the horror the convict of N. S. Wales entertains for this settlement, that we frequently hear the condemned, even from the gallows, thank God they are going to die, rather than to live at Norfolk Island. The number of criminals at the settlement, in 1835, was 1200, of whom 450 were Catholic. Of late, this number has been augmented by nearly 200 annually. They are worked in heavy irons, and fed on salt meat and maize bread. Until lately, religion was utterly excluded from these miserable men. Their deep depravity had become a proverb even in N. S. Wales. So corrupt was their most ordinary language, as incessantly to present the imagination with the absent objects of the passions as though present—so perverse, that, in their dialect, *evil* was literally called *good*, and *good*, *evil*—the well-disposed man was branded *wicked*, whilst the leader in monstrous vice was styled *virtuous*. The human heart seemed inverted, and the very conscience reversed. So indifferent had even life become, that murders

were committed in cold blood; the murderer afterwards declaring he had no ill-feeling against his victim, but that his sole object was to obtain his own release. Lots were even cast; the man on whom it fell committed the deed, his comrades being witnesses, with the sole view of being taken, for a time, from the scenes of their daily miseries to appear in the court at Sydney, although, after the execution of their comrade, they knew they should be remanded to their former haunts of wretchedness. So notorious is this fact, that it was made the ground of a legislative enactment, by whose power criminals are now tried by a special commission upon the island. This arrangement has, in a great measure, suspended such atrocities, though it has not altogether put an end to them. The life of these men was one of despair; their passions, severed from their usual objects, centred in one intense thirst for liberty, to be gained at whatever cost. Their faces were like those of demons. If a comrade was suspected of betraying their practices, he could no longer with safety sleep amongst them, but was separated to secure life.

In 1834, a conspiracy was formed by the prisoners to destroy the military and seize the island. They were defeated, and thirty-one of their number condemned to death. In 1835, I sailed to the island to prepare such of them as might be Catholic to meet their end. My unexpected appearance, late on the night of my arrival, came on them like a vision. I found them crowded in three cells, so small as barely to allow their lying down together—their upper garments thrown off for a little coolness. They had for six months been looking for their fate. I



had to announce life to all but thirteen—to these, death. A few words of preparation, and then their fate. Those who were to live wept bitterly; whilst those doomed to die, without exception, dropped on their knees, and, with dry eyes, thanked God they were to be delivered from such a place. Who can describe our emotions? I found only three of the condemned to be Catholic—four others wished me to take them also to my care. During the five days permitted for preparation, they manifested extraordinary fervour of repentance. The morning come, they received on their knees the sentence as the will of God. Loosened from their chains, they fell down in the dust, and, in the warmth of their gratitude, kissed the very feet that had brought them peace. Their death moved many of their comrades. On the two successive days of execution and burial, I preached, from the graves of the dead, to their former associates. During the week still allowed before the departure of the ship, twenty conversions followed, and one hundred and fifty general confessions. I left books behind me before departure, arranged a form of prayer for their use on Sunday, and obtained the appointment of one as reader, whose duty also it should be to teach those who were unable to read, at the intervals between labour and food.

At the close of 1836, my good Bishop permitted me again to visit Norfolk Island, a duty I had much at heart. I was received with great joy by my poor penitents, who, through all sorts of ridicule and persecution from their comrades, had persevered in their resolutions. I admitted them to the holy communion. Nearly sixty had learned to read their prayer books. The Commandant assured me that crime had consider-

ably diminished, and that the Catholics were remarkably attentive to their duties of religion. Let me not forget how much of this was owing to the prudence and solicitude of the Commandant himself. I record the name of Major Anderson with unmingled satisfaction. His minute personal knowledge of the desperate men under his charge, and the discrimination with which he encourages the well disposed, whilst he strikes terror into the obstinate, has been attended with most salutary consequences. What was my delight to find that, for the fifteen months elapsed since my last visit, there was not one Catholic to be brought before the judge. During the fifteen days allowed me before our return, three hundred confessions, and twelve conversions, rewarded my labours. I saw these dreaded characters come to the arms of religion like children. What may she not do with men when every hope from this world is departed, and nothing appears on their path but sufferings. The penitents, now become the greater number of Catholics, begged to be locked up in separate wards from the rest, that they might say their morning and night prayers together. Except these two visits, no priest has been at Norfolk Island. Since my arrival in England, I have received a letter from one of these poor prisoners, who consoles me in these terms :—

“REV. SIR,—Aware that your insignia is ‘*Non ignarus mali, miseri succurrere disco*,’ therefore I feel no hesitation in writing. I rejoice to have to inform you that of the many who received your instructions, there are none, I am aware of, returned to their former wickedness; but notwithstanding the many enemies they have to encounter, the many instruments employed by Satan to debar them from those duties due to their Creator, they have withstood all. I have also to inform you that in addition to the number

which seemed to be zealous heretofore, there are three times that number at present. They are all desirous to learn, to be instructed, and earnestly look for books; even those who have not attended you during that happy time you have been with us, want books. The wicked are constantly endeavouring to bring back to their former vice those in whom they perceive any conversion. We earnestly request you will not be long *absent* from us. The constant prayers of your most humble but unfortunate servant,

“ROBERT HEPBURNE.”

I might have paused ere giving recitals which would seem to record my own acts; but I have a higher object in view, and my reader will allow me to remind him of St. Paul's doctrine, that the most unworthy instruments are selected for the work of grace, that the power of God may be manifest.

Port Arthur contains a like number of criminals, re-transported from Van Dieman's Land. There a priest has never been seen. I was most anxious to have visited them, and the duty was enjoined me by my Bishop; but obstacles, I could not then surmount, were put in my path. What may be their condition, I dare scarcely, from the reports that reach my ears, conjecture. I can see nothing clearly beyond the approaches to that dreaded peninsula; but the portal seems to me, in the obscure distance, inscribed in lurid characters like those which Dante read:

“Enter through me, into eternal sorrow;  
Enter, and find the citizens of grief;  
Enter, and join the nation of the fallen;  
All hope leave far behind—oh you that enter.”

It remains for me to say a few words on the aboriginal population of New Holland. They have been considered, by those who have written on the subject, as the last and least intelligent of the human race. They do not, however, appear to me so far wanting in

intellect, as in power of attention and perseverance. They are said to approach nearest in resemblance to the Papuas of New Guinea and of the Indian Archipelago. They are of middle stature, their skin perfectly black, cheek-bones high, brow prominent, eyes deep sunk, with the thick projecting lip of the African, whilst the nose is as broad, but less flat, than that of the Negro. Their hair is long and coarse, except on the southern coast, and in Van Dieman's Land, where it is woolly. Their number is variously estimated: I do not think they reach above 500,000. They are distributed into tribes of from 30 to 50 person, each under a chief, and occupying a territory of from twenty to forty square miles, to transgress whose limits, into the hunting grounds of another tribe, is a declaration of war; hence the tribes have little communication with each other, except such as are hostile. Their wars are frequent. Their small numbers are owing to their scanty means of subsistence, since the country produces originally neither fruits nor esculents. Their food consists of the flesh of the kangaroo and opossum—to hunt these is their sole occupation—to which they add the worms and grubs from the trees. They run naked about the woods; for the cord of twisted bark around their persons cannot be called clothing. In the colder regions, a mantle of skins hangs from the shoulder. They rarely make use of shelter in the warmer regions; when they do, it consists of a strip of bark torn from the half circle of a tree, under which one person creeps, or of pieces of bark and branches hastily thrown together, within which four or six persons are huddled close upon each other.

They have not shown the least disposition to adopt

our habits of life, or means of subsistence. Their only art is shown in their weapons of war. These consist of a spear, a club, a shield of wood, and a singular instrument called a *boomerang*. This is made of heavy wood, curved, about two feet and a half in length, and perhaps two inches in breadth, being sharpened at the end. It is hurled from the hand to the distance of 40 paces, then springs into the air, turns, returns, and falls at the feet of the thrower. I have not yet seen this remarkable effect explained by its physical laws. Polygamy exists amongst the chiefs only. The wives of one tribe are stolen from another. The young woman is surprised, beaten down insensible with a club, dragged in triumph to the tribe, and ever afterwards treated with cruel barbarity, as an inferior. The heads of these women are covered with scars, and, after death, their skulls are found indented and diaphanous with blows. Cannibalism is sometimes practised by them. Of this there can be no doubt: I have had the declaration from their own mouths. They have neither temples nor idols, but many superstitions. They stand in great fear of one or more evil spirits. At full moon, they hold solemn religious dances in the woods beneath her beams, called *corobarees*, in which they mimic their own wars, and the natural habits of the kangaroo and emu. They have faith in the powers of witchcraft, and in the transmigration of souls—believing the spirits of their fathers to return in the forms of the animals around them, and in the white bodies of the Europeans. What may be their real ideas of a Supreme Being, of Divine Providence, and of an ultimate future state, no one has been able to elicit. It is exceedingly difficult to induce them to speak of their religious notions.

These poor creatures have often been treated by the convicts, at the out stations, with atrocious barbarity; who have even been known to shoot them, as game for sport. From these they have acquired our language in its most degraded dialect. From these they have been initiated into more than our worst vices. Their women have been shockingly treated. Where the European population is thickest, they are fast dying off. The tribe nearest Sydney has no longer more than five or six persons, and not one child to succeed their fathers. The tribes of Van Dieman's Land are nearly extinct; there do not remain more than 150 souls, and these are now placed on an island in Bass's Straits, and supported by government. This extermination of nearly a whole race has been the work of twenty years.

I much regret that the urgent demands of the European population for our spiritual assistance has hitherto prevented our giving an especial attention to this portion of our mission. Those of them who are in our neighbourhood, are so grossly corrupted by their communications with the convicts, that we can hope nothing from them. Some children, in dangerous sickness, have been baptized by the Rev. Mr. Therry, and there is occasionally one or two youths in our schools; we have been able as yet to do nothing further. Nor do I find that, from the evidence of their reports, the especial missions from other creeds have been, as yet, more successful. The only effectual method of proceeding—the urgent wants of the convicts renders this impossible at present—will be to penetrate beyond the limits of colonization, and to commence by assimilating, as far as Christianity will permit, with

their habits, until their confidence be gradually won, and their attention fixed upon a better state of things.

We have much more promising hopes of the natives of New Zealand. These islands are 1000 miles remote from Sydney; their inhabitants, a superior race, are said to approach nearest in resemblance to the Malays. Tall in stature, well made, of a copper colour, with large, dark, expressive eyes; they are social, intelligent, fond of oratory, and live together in villages, many of these being united in alliance. Clothed with garments, woven by the women, of the native flax, they cultivate the soil, and readily enter into commerce. They may be 150,000 in number. The chief occupation of the men, from infancy, is war. Their victories are followed with monstrous barbarities. The head of the fallen enemy is cut off, baked by a slow fire, then exposed to a current of cold air, after which, perfectly preserved, it is conspicuously placed, as a trophy, in the hut of the warrior, whilst he devours the body, thinking that, as he eats the flesh, he partakes the heroic qualities of the slain. Their darling passion is revenge.

Soon after the arrival of our Bishop in Sydney, there came a young man and woman from New Zealand. They were the children of chiefs, sent to us under the care of an Irish sailor, to hear of the Catholic religion. The Bishop received them with great kindness. They understood him to be "a chief of the people of God, addressing the children of chiefs." He presented to them the image of our crucified Saviour, and when they had gazed with mute and fixed attention upon it for a time, he explained to them the mystery by their own simple ideas. "It represented," he told them,

“ the Son of the Great Spirit, come down from Heaven to be a man like them, and, with the purpose of revenging the crimes of men against that Great Spirit—by torments, not inflicted upon others, but upon himself—these were a part of his sufferings.” Here the young chief shed tears. They were instructed, baptised, and returned to their country.

I have since received letters, forwarded from New Zealand, from which it appears that the new Christians, on their return, had awakened a great interest in their tribe. Their incessant talk of what they had heard, of what they had seen, and of the ceremonials of our church, which had strongly impressed them, had induced another chief to send a message to the Bishop, requesting, if he came over, the instruction and baptism of himself and his son. These circumstances appear to present a favourable opening for the introduction of the mission into that country. I am happy to add that two missionaries are now on their way thither, from the *Missions Étrangères*.

And now, having given an outline of our mission and our labours, permit me, dear reader, to say a word upon our wants, which are very great.

Over the vast range of N. S. Wales, there are at present only seven missionaries. Sydney alone would require three, and yet the Bishop is sometimes left alone, with its duties added to his own. There are vast districts, such as that of Bathurst, covered with Catholics, and without a single priest. Van Dieman's Land requires seven priests at least, and has only two. Two are demanded for Norfolk Island, for one alone would be a thousand miles from a brother priest. The south and western colonies, stretching along a line of



2,500 miles, have never seen a priest. The aboriginal population, covering the vast interior, are under the shadow of death. The government is prepared to pay the expenses of a few more priests for N. S. Wales, but not of an adequate number; of one for Norfolk Island—of none at present for Van Dieman's Land. Without some such institution as the Sisters of Charity, from the mother country, it seems impossible to do much effectually with the female convicts. A seminary is required for the education of youth, and for the gradual formation of a body of native clergy and schoolmasters, for which we are without means. We have four buildings raised and closed in for service, but not one ceiled or plastered. We are commencing several others, but our present fund for their completion is *hope*. The government is disposed to proportion a contribution to the gifts of the faithful;—but, with us, the great proportion are prisoners without a penny. Our few wooden altars are naked of ornament—we have scarcely a crucifix to put upon them. The priests who go out will be without vestments or chalices. Books of prayer and of instruction are at an unlimited demand: we are obliged to give one to every poor prisoner who arrives, and who can read. How the Catholic prisoner clings to his prayer book given by his priest! How he clasps it, when every thing else is gone! How ingeniously he preserves it through every hazard! In the remote wilds, it is to him in place of priest, and altar, and sacrifice. We need means for the temperate defence of our doctrines, for a great portion of the Australian press has recently flooded us with the old calumnies. And, indeed, what do we not need? We need the fervent prayers of the faithful.

And now, dear reader, having followed us through the vast regions of our mission—having shared in our toils, our sorrows, our anxieties, and distresses—permit an appeal to your charity.

You are not called, like us, to leave all things for the sake of the miserable; but to aid us in the work of their reparation is the vocation of all. I am but a voice—the voice of many thousands crying to you from the ends of the earth—the voice of lamentations—the groans of the captive—the call for help—the cry of despair—the burden of Australia. Fifty thousand souls are festering in bondage. The iron has entered their souls—the scourge devours them. Their calamities can only be expressed by inspirations of sorrow. “They went down in great ships upon the sea, they saw the wonders of God in the deep—through evils their souls pined away. They are cast upon the ends of the earth, deprived of all their dear ones. Bitter things are written against them—they are consumed for the sins of their youth. Sorrow oppresses their lives; wrinkles bear witness against them. They reap the sorrows they had sown. Their bread is loathsome to their eye—their meat unto their soul. As slaves they long for the shade; they sigh for the end of their work. They lie down to rest saying, when shall I rise? They rise, and walk through sorrow to the darkness. Their skin is withered and drawn together; their flesh is devoured by the sun and dust. They are encompassed round about with stripes, the scourge comes upon them and they faint. The eyes that saw them shall see them no more; their place no more beholds them. Their children are oppressed with want; they know not whether they come to honour

or to dishonour. Their hands render unto them sorrow. Their bones are filled with the corruptions of their youth. The riches they swallowed are cast forth; they are punished for all they did. They are straitened; God hath rained down war upon them; the sword is drawn—as it cometh forth, it glittereth in bitterness; the terrible ones come and go upon them. A fire that no hand kindled devours them; they are afflicted when alone in their tent. They look for death, as those who dig for treasure, and it cometh not; they are exceedingly rejoiced when they have found a grave. The offspring of their house is exposed. What remains of them is buried in death, and their widows do not weep. As for me, when I remember, I am afraid; trembling seizeth my flesh. Am I not enclosed in a prison with the dead? Shall I speak but in the affliction of my soul? Shall I remain silent whilst strength remains?"

We have given ourselves—we have nothing left; we call on you for help. If, in your love of God, you would see banished from before his face this army of crime, which offends him—help us. If, in your charity, you look out for the poorest objects, if those most lost, if those who have least aid within themselves—help us. If you would descend to the deepest miseries, and carry down there the most blessed good, and pour it out to the greatest number of the unhappy—assist us. If you would aspire to a godlike work, if to emulate the perfection of that Eternal Father, whose work is the creation of good, and the diffusion of light through the places of darkness, and the preparation of enjoyment, co-operate with him in the divinest of all his divine works, the salvation of the fallen—help us.

If you would be associated in the redemption of

Christ, who came down with sacrifice to deliver us when heathens, and preached to the souls in prison—help us. If to share in the merits of our apostleship without the toil, and in our blessed consolations without the sacrifice—if to combine the works of mercy spiritual with those corporal, and present them in one act to Christ—help us. If to these despairing thousands you would be as the visible providence of God—if at that last dread day you would hear their appealing voices on your behalf, “*The Lord sent this his angel, who delivered me out of prison*”—if, in that great hour, you would hear from the Eternal Son the decision of your election, “*I was in prison, and ye come unto me*”—if you would snatch from perdition these souls, wash them in the blood of the cross, and place them, as celestial rubies, in your own immortal crown—bring to us help.

If ever there was a prayer, deep, solemn, earnest—if ever a supplication of the heart from which all pride and confidence were gone, crushed out by the force of calamity and the pressure of distress—if ever an entreaty from the soul, it is the cry of the convict to you. He has offended; is he not punished? He put you in danger; is he not cast out? He deserves; are you then the avenger of blood? “*Forgive us our sins, as we forgive others.*” Have you then nothing to forgive? Shall the cross be taken down? the wounds of Christ cease to flow? the gates of mercy be closed, and all pardon be at an end? Whatever have been their crimes, are they not now sacred, anointed with sorrow and consecrated to affliction? What if their conditions of life had been yours, yours theirs? We are relentless and undiscerning in our condemnations

of the fallen. I have often compared the monster hunted from before man with the poor penitent trembling before God, and have found them in one person. How many good tendencies and sources of right feeling are there even in the worst of men, for which the world gives them little credit, and which, had they been duly appreciated and rightly directed, would have made all the difference! I have known men who, though death awaited them, and all the moving mysteries of religion were displayed before their faith, yet felt themselves hard and insensible as the iron that bound them; but they felt it as a torture of the soul, from which they strove and prayed deliverance in vain. Were these men impenitent? Yet how could the world have comprehended their repentance? Could you but see those dark-browed men, when we recall to them their innocent years; when we oppose their sufferings with the passion of Christ; when, unfolding the mystery of grace, we show them that, with this world and its hopes vanished, all is far from being lost: could you but mark the fixed gaze—the tremble—the long sob—the tear, frozen since infancy, bursting down the furrowed cheek of clay—the hard-clasped hands—the shudder, as some great truth comes forth—the prostrate form, the glowing face, the fervent prayer—you would confess in them the power of grace, the will broken of its stubbornness, the heart subdued. Oh, who will give them of those apostolic men, who dwell beneath the shadow of the cross, and preach nothing but its excellencies. Who will go forth under the banner of the bleeding King, insatiable of suffering; who will seek no rest but when they bring peace; and who will count their wealth in the number of rescued souls.

But let me conclude—rest I am not allowed ; for wherever I go and whatever I do, the voices of these wretched men follow me. Their shrunken forms gather round me, an army of distress reproaching my delays. The stagnant gaze from the interior—the dissolute features from the factory—the red glare through the sunken eye of the barrack—the down-bent dejection of the iron-gang—the swollen head raised from the death-cell floor, repressing the bursting heart—the shame-sunk female from her destroyer, bowed down with memory—the palsied head, white with age, but without reverence, from the asylum—the haggard despair from Norfolk Island ; their spectral forms gather round us, like a forest of humanity blasted by the visitation of God. Oh, remember the human lot, and have pity ! The presence of Christ is amongst them ; his wounds and his agonies bleed anew ; he calls on you for help. Will you refuse him ? No ; for you also are the child of his sorrows. The wild heathen wanders through them deprived of light. The little children point with their finger, and ask you whether they shall become like these. From the shadow of death that covers them, “ bound in poverty and iron,” they stretch forth their arms with mine to supplicate you.

## NOTE.

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Lest I should be suspected of exaggerating the effects of the lash, so often inflicted, I think it proper, however painful the exhibition, to present my readers with the following extracts from reports of punishments under the existing law, delivered by the magistrates of the colony to the government, in answer to a circular of 21st August, 1833. They are cited from a pamphlet printed in Sydney in 1834, and addressed to Lord Stanley by "An Unpaid Magistrate." The author observes—"I could easily have extracted severer punishments than these, but have no taste for such topics."—

"Adam Ballatine, disobedience of orders in going to the hospital under pretence of sickness; a troublesome character, 25 lashes. This boy received 25 lashes on the 22d of July; he cried out *loudly* at every lash; the blood ran *freely* from fresh and old sores; he was *severely* punished.

"Edward Scandrake, neglect of duty by feigning sickness, 25 lashes. He received 50 lashes last Monday week, but was never flogged before; was sore from the last punishment; blood came at the first stroke; he screamed *dreadfully* at every lash, the blood running freely from the old wounds; he lost much blood.

"Andrew McMahon, drunk and disorderly, 50 lashes. This was an old offender, had been flogged repeatedly; this was the first time that he was punished with the regulation cat; he bellowed at every lash, and writhed with agony; his back was very much lacerated,

and more blood appeared than I had observed on any other criminal ; when taken down he seemed much exhausted, and cried like a child.

" Francis Hayes, disorderly conduct and neglect of work, 30 lashes. A young man ; had been punished before ; at the first lash he cried out, which he did during the whole of his punishment, and struggled most violently, calling out that he could not stand it, and praying to be taken down ; about the 8th lash blood came, and he begged for water, which was given him ; his back was much lacerated, and he appeared a good deal exhausted when taken down.

" George Delbridge, drunk and disorderly, 50 lashes. A strong muscular man ; previous to being tied up, he appeared to think lightly of the punishment he was about to receive ; the first lash, however, caused him to change his opinion ; he groaned aloud, and let his head fall on his shoulder after every stripe ; blood appeared about the 9th lash, and his back was very much lacerated at the conclusion of the punishment.

" John Carroll, neglect of duty by feigning sickness, 25 lashes. This boy received 12 lashes about three weeks ago, and was flogged a short time before that ; cried out loudly at the 1st lash ; blood came on the 18th lash, and ran freely throughout the remaining part of the punishment. He must have felt *much* pain.

" Jeremiah Higgins, absconding, 25 lashes. This man was flogged about 5 years ago ; he *writhed* under the pain ; the skin was lacerated at the 7th lash ; the blood at the 12th lash ; he cried out at the 22d lash. This man was *severely punished*.

" John Thacker, neglect of duty, 50 lashes. Bruised, lacerated, and blood drawn.

" William Robinson, drunk and making away with a part of his dress which was given him by his master, 50 lashes. This man was never flogged before ; he cried out at every lash ; the skin was lacerated at the 12th lash ; the blood appeared at the 20th ; this man *suffered* intense agony. Twenty lashes would have been an *ample* warning to him.

" John Green, absconding, 50 lashes. Appeared to suffer much, bled freely, and fainted after the punishment."



## APPENDIX.

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Donations for the Australasian Mission will be received by Dr. Ullathorne, or at the bank of Messrs. Wright and Co., London; also by the following clergymen in various parts of the kingdom:—The Rev. Dr. Baldacconi, Rev. Mr. Rolfe, Rev. Mr. Hepstonsall, London; the Revs. Dr. Youens, V. Glover, and F. Murphy, Liverpool; V. Rev. B. Rayment, York; Rev. J. Worswick, Newcastle; Rev. J. Render, Hull; Rev. H. Brewer, Brown Edge; Rev. Messrs. West and Connolly, Preston; Rev. R. Thompson, Weld Bank, Chorley; Rev. J. Crook and Rev. W. Turner, Manchester; Rev. G. Brown, Lancaster; Rev. H. Warmley, Leeds; Rev. J. M. M'Donnell, Birmingham; Rev. L. Barber, Salford House; Rev. W. Willson, Nottingham; Rev. Mr. Cooper, Bath; Rev. Mr. Shann, Cheltenham; V. Rev. Dr. Weedall, Oscott; Rev. J. Brownbill, Stonyhurst; Rev. Dr. Brown, Downside. Contributions in books, vestments, altar plate, &c, are requested to be forwarded, addressed to Dr. Ullathorne, 63, Paternoster-row, London, or to 42, Ranelagh-street, Liverpool.

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### ERRATUM.

In "Preliminary Observations," for "sixty thousand" read "fifty thousand."







